

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims by replacing them with the following complete listing:

Claims 1-7. (*Canceled*)

Claim 8. (*Currently Amended*) A cross-country ski system comprising:

a cross country ski comprising a central zone adapted to receive a device for binding a boot to the ski;

the central zone of the ski comprising a binding zone having a location for receiving the binding device and an upper support surface of the ski;

the upper support surface of the ski being arranged on ~~[[a]]~~ at least one of two lateral sides of the location to receive the binding device, the upper support surface being capable of coming in direct contact with the boot when a skier using the cross-country ski system exerts a pressure force;

the location for receiving the binding device ~~comprises~~ comprising an upwardly facing recess of the upper surface of the ski.

Claim 9. (*Currently Amended*) A cross-country ski system according to claim 8, wherein:

in the central zone of the ski, at least one lateral shoulder is arranged on one of the two lateral sides of the location for receiving the binding device such that the boot can be supported directly on the shoulder.

Claim 10. (*Previously Presented*) A cross-country ski system according to claim 8, wherein:

the ski comprises two lateral upper surfaces arranged on respective lateral sides of the location for receiving the binding device.

Claim 11. (*Previously Presented*) A cross-country ski system according to claim 9, wherein:
the shoulder comprises a support surface for the boot arranged above the upper surface of the location for receiving the binding device.

Claim 12. (*Previously Presented*) A cross-country ski system according to claim 8, wherein:
the upper support surface of the ski is longitudinally arranged in an area corresponding to a metatarsophalangeal bending zone of the user's foot.

Claim 13. (*Previously Presented*) A cross-country ski system according to claim 8, further comprising:
a binding device adapted to be fixed on the ski in the location for receiving the binding device.

Claim 14. (*Previously Presented*) A cross-country ski system according to claim 13, wherein:
the binding device has, at least in the area of the support surface, a lesser width than a width of the ski.

Claim 15. (*Currently Amended*) A cross-country ski system according to claim 13, wherein:
the binding device is adapted to be fitted within the recess of the upper surface of the ski;
the binding device has a rib adapted to be positioned within a downwardly facing longitudinal recess in a sole of the boot;
the binding device includes ~~including~~ no baseplate to be mounted upon the ski, so that a lower external surface of the boot is adapted to be directly supported on the upper support surface of the ski.

Claim 16. (*Previously Presented*) A cross-country ski system according to claim 8, wherein:

the ski has, at least in part of the central zone, an upper surface, the transverse width of said upper surface being greater than a width of the lower gliding surface of the ski.

Claim 17. (*New*) A cross-country ski system according to claim 13, wherein:

the binding device includes a front jaw adapted to engage a front bar of the boot for enabling articulation of the boot with respect to the ski;

the binding device includes an elastic return mechanism, said elastic return mechanism being rearwardly spaced from the front jaw and being adapted to engage a rear bar of the boot for applying an elastic return force to the rear bar.

Claim 18. (*New*) A cross-country ski system according to claim 13, wherein:

the binding device is adapted to be affixed to the ski by being positioned within the recess of the upper surface of the ski;

the binding device has a rib adapted to be positioned within a downwardly facing longitudinal recess in a sole of the boot;

the binding device includes no baseplate that would prevent a lower external surface of the boot from direct supporting engagement on the upper support surface of the ski.

Claim 19. (*New*) A cross-country ski system according to claim 15, further comprising:

a boot having a support surface adapted to be supported directly by said upper support surface of the ski.

Claim 20. (*New*) A cross-country ski system according to claim 19, wherein:

said support surface of the boot is in a metatarsophalangeal bending zone of the boot.

Claim 21. (*New*) A cross-country ski system comprising:

a cross country ski having a longitudinally extending binding zone spaced from front and rear ends of the ski, said binding zone comprising:

a pair of transversely spaced apart longitudinally extending upper support surfaces adapted to support directly support surfaces of a sole of a boot at least in a metatarsophalangeal bending zone of the boot;

an upwardly open longitudinally extending recess positioned between said pair of upper support surfaces;

a binding device adapted to be fixed upon the ski in the recess of the binding zone, the binding device having an upwardly projecting rib adapted to be positioned within a downwardly facing longitudinally groove in the sole of the boot;

at least in the binding zone, the ski has an upper surface width greater than a width of the binding device.

Claim 22. (*New*) A cross-country ski system according to claim 21, wherein:

the binding device includes no baseplate that would prevent a lower external surface of the boot from direct supporting engagement on the upper support surfaces of the ski.

Claim 23. (*New*) A cross-country ski system according to claim 21, wherein:

the binding device includes a front jaw adapted to engage a front bar of the boot for enabling articulation of the boot with respect to the ski;

the binding device includes an elastic return mechanism, said elastic return mechanism being rearwardly spaced from the front jaw and being adapted to engage a rear bar of the boot for applying an elastic return force to the rear bar.

Claim 24. (*New*) A cross-country ski system according to claim 23, further comprising:

a boot having support surfaces adapted to be supported directly by said upper support surfaces of the ski, said boot having said front and rear bars.